

Editing Checklist



When revising and editing your assignment, ask yourself...

Have I answered the question or task as fully as possible?

- ☐ What is my thesis/ central proposition/ main assertion?
- ☐ Do I make a clear argument or take a position about the topic? Do I state that position in my introduction?
- ☐ Does my introduction or opening paragraph prepare the reader for what follows?

Is my essay clearly structured?

- ☐ Does my assignment have a clear introduction, a body and a definite conclusion?
- ☐ Does the assignment advance in logical stages?
- ☐ Are the major points connected? Are the relationships between them expressed clearly?
- ☐ Do the major points all relate to the topic and contribute to answering the task or question?

Are my paragraphs clearly connected and coherent?

- ☐ Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence?
- ☐ Do the sentences flow smoothly and logically from point to point? Does each sentence clearly follow on from the one before?
- ☐ Does each paragraph state its case clearly and completely, or should there be more evidence/ detail?
- ☐ Are there adequate transitions between sentences and paragraphs? Are transitions varied or are they all the same kind?
- ☐ Are all examples and quotes relevant to and supportive of my answer?
- ☐ Are facts and opinions supported with examples or explanations where necessary?

Is my written expression appropriate?

- ☐ Have I used direct and clear language?
- ☐ Have I explained my ideas clearly and explicitly?
- ☐ Have I kept my audience in mind? Have I said all I need to say so that my reader can understand, or am I assuming they will 'know what I mean'?
- ☐ Have I written complete, grammatically correct sentences?
- ☐ In long sentences, have I separated related ideas with commas or semicolons for easier understanding?
- ☐ Is my use of tenses correct?
- ☐ Have I used non-discriminatory language?

Have I fully referenced my sources of information?

- ☐ Have I referenced all the words, ideas and information sources I have used in my assignment?
- ☐ Have I used a consistent referencing style?
- ☐ Is there a clear distinction between my thoughts and words and those of the author(s) I've read and cited?
- ☐ Are quotations properly introduced? Are they accurate? Are they formatted correctly?
- ☐ Do the quotations add evidence or provide an authoritative voice, or am I letting the author(s) speak for me? Would writing it in my own words be more effective?

Have I remained within or exceeded the set word limit?

- ☐ I don't have enough words:
 - Have I fully answered the question or task?
 - Do I need to read more? Should I include more information or discussion?
 - Have I provided enough evidence to support my argument/s?
- ☐ I have too many words:
 - Have I included only relevant information?
 - Is there any unnecessary repetition in my assignment?
 - Is my written expression as clear and concise as possible, or is it too 'wordy'?

Have I proof read and revised my assignment for errors?

- ☐ Have I checked my spelling? Have I read through my assignment and not just relied on a computer spellchecker?
- ☐ Is all my bibliographical information correct?
- ☐ Have I used correct punctuation? Have I ended every sentence with a full stop?

Is my assignment well presented?

- ☐ Does the presentation follow any guidelines set by my lecturer or school?
- ☐ Have I included a cover sheet? (assignment cover sheets are available from your school office)
- ☐ Have I made sure my assignment is legible? Is it typed or written neatly?
- ☐ Have I used double-line spacing?
- ☐ Have I numbered pages and used wide margins?
- ☐ Have I kept an extra copy?

Further Reading

Bemidji State University Writing Resource Center 1997, How to Proofread and Edit Your Writing: A Guide for Student Writers, Internet, <http://cal.bemidji.msus.edu/wrc/handouts/ProofAndEdit.html>. (27 August 2001)

Barnett, S. and Cain, A. 1997, A Short Guide to Writing About Literature, Harper Collins.

Cuba, I. 1988, A Short Guide to Writing About Social Science. Harper Collins.

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